


# Sustainable tourism strategies in the Palomino township, department of La Guajira\*

*Estrategias de turismo sostenible en el corregimiento de Palomino, departamento de La Guajira*


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## Abstract

**i) Introduction:** Tourism is one of the most relevant economic activities worldwide and a potential engine for the development of developing communities; **ii) objective:** This article aims to propose sustainable tourism strategies in the Palomino township, department of La Guajira within the framework of economic reactivation after the covid 19 pandemic. **iii) methodology:** The research is based on a study with a mixed approach and descriptive scope, where questionnaire surveys were applied to 47 hostels/hotels located in Palomino and registered with the Chamber of Commerce of La Guajira. The data were statistically analyzed in SPSS. **iv) results:** Among the most relevant findings, it is considered that the problem of coastal erosion, the lack of tourist infrastructure and the poor coverage of public services are a barrier to sustainability in the territory; **v) conclusions:** Finally, actions are recommended to strengthen the economy, preserve identity and conserve natural and environmental resources, promote the destination, implement digital marketing strategies and enhance big data that accelerate economic recovery after the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Tourism; Sustainable tourism; Strategies; Sustainable tourism Strategies.

## Resumen

**i) Introducción:** El turismo es una de las actividades económicas con mayor relevancia a nivel mundial y un motor potencial para el desarrollo de las comunidades en vías de desarrollo; **ii) objetivo:** El presente artículo pretende proponer estrategias de turismo sostenible en el corregimiento de Palomino, departamento de La Guajira en el marco de la reactivación económica después de la pandemia por COVID 19; **iii) metodología:** La investigación parte de un estudio de enfoque mixto y alcance descriptivo, donde se aplicaron encuestas tipo cuestionario a 47 hostales/hoteles ubicados en Palomino y registrados en la Cámara de Comercio de La Guajira. Los datos fueron analizados estadísticamente en SPSS. **iv) resultados:** Dentro de los hallazgos más relevantes, se considera que la problemática de erosión costera, la falta de infraestructura turística y la deficiente cobertura de servicios públicos son una barrera hacia la sostenibilidad; **v) conclusiones:** Finalmente, se recomiendan acciones para fortalecer la economía, preservar la identidad y conservar los recursos naturales y ambientales, promover el destino, implementar estrategias de marketing digital y potenciar el big data que permitan acelerar la recuperación económica luego de la crisis generada por la pandemia del COVID-19.

**Palabras clave:** Turismo; Turismo sostenible; Estrategias; Estrategias de turismo sostenible.

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## Introduction

The research presented describes the current situation of the Palomino township, La Guajira, a territory that corresponds to the municipality of Dibulla and that has taken great interest from national and foreign visitors due to the particularity of its geography, fusing landscapes and cultures of the Caribbean Region due to the presence of all thermal floors in its 6,633 km<sup>2</sup> area.

This township located on the Troncal de Caribe, 80 km from Santa Marta and 90 kilometers from Riohacha, gives locals and visitors the opportunity to enjoy long walks on its beaches from where you can see the highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the snow-capped peaks facing the Caribbean and water tributaries that originate in the jungle and flow into the sea, a mystical experience that unites nature with indigenous culture.

Under this context, the interest of this article focuses on proposing good sustainable tourism practices in favor of economic, social and environmental growth in the Palomino township, La Guajira, based on the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations - UN, 2022) in which its inhabitants are favored and the environmental balance is respected.

With these strategies, Palomino can show itself to the world as a sustainable tourist destination and find new opportunities for actors, that involve new ways of satisfying the demands of tourists. provide a safe, satisfactory and complete experience to visitors, linked to convenience for all without discrimination of sex, ancestry, disability or other appearances of discrimination.

For the development of the research, four sections are described consisting of: the theoretical framework mainly supported by the presentation of sustainable tourism, sustainable development objectives and their implications. The second section details the methodology implemented from the mixed approach, with a document review component and another application of quantitative research instruments, which served as input to develop section three, which includes the results of the research and gives an account of the difficult situation that the town is experiencing in terms of unemployment, coastal erosion, deterioration of local infrastructure and the latent risk that this constitutes due to lack of optimal administration of these resources.

Finally, through the sustainable development objectives and taking into account the relevance of information and communication technologies in business competitiveness, strategies related to sustainability and digital marketing were proposed to enhance the image of Palomino as a sustainable tourist destination.

## 2. THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Tourism

Tourism is a concept that has had multiple modifications by different authors over time. Offi-

cially, the UNWTO (2000a) defines tourism as “the activities carried out by people during their trips and stays and places other than their usual environment, for a consecutive period of time of less than one year, for leisure purposes, for business and others” (p. 7) For his part, Ledhesma (2016) defines tourism as the entire spectrum that is generated from the action, that involves the displacement of human beings to a place different from their residence with possibilities recreational, that is, with intentions of rest, fun and/or contact with the receiving destination.

Although, these concepts have common characteristics such as the planned physical exodus and the reception of people in places that are not their natural environment, Ledhesma (2016) adds that a tourist activity the fulfillment of other actions in said destination that not only includes rest, leisure and pleasure but also any other reason that means profit such as the search for health services, provision of professional services or short visits to family members. Therefore, tourism is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that simultaneously involves companies, the state, universities and the populations that live in the destinations.

## 2.2. Sustainable Tourism

The term sustainable development was introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the “Brundtland Report” in 1987 and which literally stated: “that which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs” (Pérez cited in Gómez 2017, p. 36).

The expression began to spread in 1992 due to the “Earth Summit” that was held in Rio de Janeiro, where Agenda 21 took off, which “was a complete methodological process to launch development. sustainable in the 21st century”, in which the travel and tourism sector is identified as one of the few industries that have the potential to make a positive contribution to the sustainability of life on the planet.

At the same time, the Federation of National and Natural Parks indicates that this constitutes “all forms of tourism development, management, and activity that maintain the environmental, social and economic integrity, as well as the well-being of natural and cultural resources. in perpetuity” (FNNP cited in Aragón, 2005, p. 13).

Pérez (2004) gives a more general definition, focusing particularly on the tourist as “one who aims to satisfy the needs of tourists, as well as tourist destinations, protecting and increasing future opportunities” (p. 22).

Finally, Tahiri et al. (2022) consider that:

The main objectives of sustainable tourism are the following: avoiding the adverse impacts on the environment, natural resources, and local tradition and culture; ensuring the conservation of local ecosystems; generating income; new employments; and increase the visibility and competitiveness of the country worldwide. (p. 17)

The sustainability of tourism addresses multiple factors that make its measurement and standardization difficult. In addition, it is necessary to consider that the competitiveness of a tourist destination does not depend only on comparative advantages but also on competitive advantages, which implies efficient management of resources and services. With a long-term vision (Estevão et al., 2020). In agreement with what was proposed by Walker et al. (2021) to achieve sustainable tourism that is socially acceptable, economically viable and environmentally compatible, it is necessary that there be a long-term commitment that offers flexible policies while moving towards their implementation.

Governments and companies have increased their efforts to address sustainability within tourism activity, taking into account the social, environmental and economic impact of the sector worldwide. Paredes (2022) developed research with the objective of analyzing strategies for sustainable tourism development in the Yarinacocha district in Peru. Among the findings, it shows that social strategies in the educational field consider the diversification of the curriculum to be essential to promote awareness about sustainable tourism through activities with an environmental and intercultural focus. In security, the activation of the Tourism Police, the Regional Network Plan for tourist protection and the identification of formal services are part of the solution to thefts and scams.

Within the economic strategies, tourism infrastructure construction projects, simplified processes to create companies in the tourism sector and the development of articulated fairs are proposed as options to promote investments and generate employment. Within environmental strategies, activities for the protection of natural resources in tourist destinations are prioritized.

For his part, Leguizamón-Gómez et al. (2020) developed a purpose of this work is to identify factors that can be developed in terms of sustainable tourism in the region, having as a starting point the public management as a central axis. It has been conclusively obtained that there are personal, cultural and organizational factors of deficiency, as well as economic factors such as pandemic caused by the Covid-19, which have a notoriously unfavorable impact on the promotion of tourism in the municipality of Chinácota.

Under these perspectives, there is an integrative harmony of the various factors that, in theory, could allow the scope proclaimed by sustainability, in terms of: the preservation of the tourist place in all aspects, but not only on the environmental level as is falsely believe, but also in the economic and social development of the communities that are part of it and that in one way or another may be harmed by the presence of travelers in their territories. In this sense, it is likely that identity, tradition and cultural values will also be put at risk due to the presence of others that over time may replace them, contrary to what sustainability proposes, since its purpose is integral benefit of the populations together with their natural resources.

### 2.3. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all Member States of the United Nations as a universal call to end poverty, help the world and ensure that everyone enjoys of peace and

tranquility by 2030 (UN, 2015). According to Sachs (2021), “the SDGs promote socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth” (p. 234).

Although it is possible that tourism can contribute significantly to the fulfillment of all the SDGs, Hall (2019) maintains that tourism is only mentioned three times throughout the 2030 Agenda: through milestones directly related to SDG 8, “Decent work and economic growth; SDG 12, “Responsible production and consumption” and SDG 14, “Life below water”

González (2023) consider that:

The SDGs are articulated as a strategic tool, which offers the tourism sector the necessary tools for decision-making, creativity and innovation, where it is not only about assuming an ethical commitment in tourism management, but it is also important align activities, products and services with environmental, social and good governance (ESG) criteria based on a roadmap that guarantees long-term growth and development. (p. 36)

Today, tourism is a transversal economic activity and it can apply, directly or indirectly, to all the SDGs; however, it is directly related to the goals of goals 8, 9, 12 and 14, which are related to inclusive and sustainable economic development, consumption and production and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources.

Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth: tourism is one of the driving forces of universal economic growth and is currently responsible for generating 1 in 11 jobs (UNWTO, 2019). This means that there is an opportunity to achieve full employment for the sake of improving skills and professional development.

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure: for the development of tourism, infrastructure of both private and public origin and an innovative environment are needed. This is where tourism can motivate the improvement of infrastructure within a framework of sustainability that attracts more visitors and generates other sources of investment.

Goal 12: Responsible production and consumption: environmental protection for locals and visitors is important to guarantee the integrity of the natural and cultural heritage of the territories, but sustainable consumption and production models are aimed at measuring the impact on the consumption of electricity, including the contribution of renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions, nature and biodiversity conservation, territorial planning, land use, and water and waste management (Peralta, 2022).

Goal 14: Underwater Life: Tourism could become one of the best tools to promote the protection of oceans and seas worldwide. For example, hotels and travel agencies could become multipliers of awareness campaigns about the fragility of the oceans and promote initiatives in which travelers receive information about marine life and species such as dolphins, whales and coral reefs (Rifai, 2017).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This research was developed under a mixed approach of descriptive and non-experimental nature. The population studied was made up of companies in the hotel/hospitality sector located in the Palomino township whose economic activity is accommodation in hotels or accommodation in resorts, which according to the database provided by the de La Guajira (2020), corresponds to 100. Through probabilistic sampling and under a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, it was obtained that the representative sample was 62 companies, which were contacted via WhatsApp and by telephone call, but only 47 expressed interest in being part of the study.

The primary information was obtained through surveys carried out with the managers/administrators of the hotels/hostels of Palomino where the current tourist situation of the township was diagnosed and the economic advantages concerning tourist activity were determined. Through individual interviews with representative actors of the township, the risks to which the inhabitants and natural resources are exposed as a result of the economic activities generated by tourism were identified. The sources of secondary information were obtained from a bibliographic review framed in tourism development plans, theses related to the object of the study, historical background, theoretical aspects of tourism, scientific articles, among others.

### 4. RESULTS

#### •4.1 Diagnosis of the tourist situation of the Palomino township, La Guajira

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on the tourist activity of the Corregimiento, leaving the entire hotel and hospitality population without income, which has brought with it multiple inconveniences such as the liquidation of contracts or dismissal of employees due to zero income. for 12.7% of the sample under study. These results have been detrimental to the Palomino township because tourism is the main economic activity for the population, which has generated a high unemployment rate and bankrupted 12.75% of the hotel and hospitality population. The absence of income and tourists has also generated inconveniences for this population at the time of its reopening because 29.79% of them do not have the resources to assume the high costs of the biosafety protocols established by the local government.

Regarding government support for the Palomino township, this was little or none for the hotel and hospitality population, with only three (3) hotels/hostels of the 47 respondents that have received payroll subsidy and two (2) of them only stated that they had received talks and a small market to supply one or two people maximum.

Within the characteristics of the hotels and hostels, respondents also stated that Palomino has a significant number of eco-hostels that are made of 70% wood, and that type of construction is more attractive to European tourists. Likewise, they state that Palomino's public services are

very deficient because water is supplied once a week, there is no sewage, electricity is very intermittent, they do not have fixed telephone networks and the only stable public service with which they count is natural gas.

Also, the respondents stated which are the main tourist attractions of the Palomino district, among which the Palomino River and the San Salvador River stand out, the things of the Caribbean Sea from where the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta can be seen; the mouth where the sea and the river meet; La Cangrejera (habitat of many crabs), the indigenous house where the indigenous people stock up on the market to survive, the indigenous town where they live, Mamaite Rehabilitation and recreation center for the indigenous communities of Palomino and the Sierra itself for the practice of extreme sports and ecotourism.

The above results allow to configure the tourist situation of the Palomino township, revealing the difficult situation of the hotel sector and the township in general, since tourism is its main economic activity, but it requires public and private investment.

#### **4.2 Risks for the inhabitants and natural resources of the Palomino township, La Guajira**

In relation to the risks to which the inhabitants and the natural resources of the Palomino district are exposed, as a result of the activity generated by the tourism sector, it was observed that 63.7% of the businessmen in the hotel/hospitality sector have little interest in investing and protecting natural resources because they consider that this item should come from the entities that collect their taxes and it is the government's duty to preserve and care for tourist sites.

Regarding the preservation of the customs and traditions of the local population, it is vitally important to highlight that the traditional or native cultures of the township are always respected and preserved by a large percentage of those surveyed (63.4%). For its part, the interviews carried out allowed to know the perception of the inhabitants regarding their ecosystem, considering that the natural resources of the township are being used improperly and poorly regulated and that tourist activity is destroying part of the natural ecosystem, for example, La Cangrejera, a place very popular with tourists located at the mouth of the river but which is disappearing because motorcycles are being allowed to enter, which sometimes kill the crabs that are on the shore. They also indicated that in periods of high tourist demand, natural resources are affected because there is more water consumption and visitors and locals generate a greater amount of waste.

On the other hand, the beach in the Palomino district presents coastal erosion, a natural process responsible for the reduction of the beach due to the action of the increasingly higher waves that try to recover the space that belonged to it years ago. This has destroyed the mangrove and the mouth, has reduced the space occupied by the bars and restaurants on the first line near the sea and has left the town without a beach area for bathers.

#### **4.3 Actions to strengthen tourism activity in the Palomino district**



Based on the findings and information obtained from the research instruments applied and in Decreto 055 del 2020 and Decreto 131 del 30 de mayo 2020, among others, a PESTEL analysis (Table 1) was carried out, which denotes the existence of difficulties in implementing the principles of sustainability, because it involves diverse stakeholders with goals and beliefs. However, the COVID-19 pandemic requires entrepreneurs in the sector to think about sustainability as the new normal by generating a positive social, environmental, economic and cultural impact, with

**Table 1**  
*Pestel Analysis of Palomino*

<b>Political/legal</b>		<b>Economic</b>	
The powers in tourism matters correspond mainly to the government where they are located.		The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on the tourist activity of the Palomino District, leaving the entire hotel and hospitality population without income, which has brought multiple inconveniences such as:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan de Desarrollo Municipal 2020 – 2023: Dibulla, es tu oportunidad (Alcaldía Municipal de Dibulla, 2020)</li> <li>- Decreto No 055 del 2020 "by which a public calamity is decreed due to the risks of coastal erosion in the coastal area."</li> <li>- Decreto N 096 de 2020 "by which mandatory preventive isolation measures and maintenance of public order are adopted and applied in the department of La Guajira by virtue of the health emergency generated by the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic".</li> <li>- Taxes and biosafety protocols established for reopening.</li> <li>- Population infrastructure</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The total population surveyed was left without income and 12.75% of them went bankrupt.</li> <li>- A large percentage of the population of the Palomino district was left unemployed as a result of the pandemic.</li> <li>- Increase in poverty</li> <li>- Government support has been little or none, with only three (3) hotels/hostels of the 47 respondents having received payroll subsidy.</li> </ul>	
The population surveyed states that there is little affinity when working with the government in favor of the tourist activity of the Palomino district.		Information provided by the surveyed population	
<b>Social cultural</b> The population of Palomino and its economic activity is strongly linked to tourism and its indigenous peoples: Kogui, Wiwa, Arhuacos and Wayuu who consider that their customs and traditions are respected and preserved. The community may not be affected as its tourist resources such as the beach and the crab farm disappear.		<b>Ecological</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improper and poorly regulated use</li> <li>- Destruction of the natural ecosystem: the crab fish</li> <li>- Coastal erosion: Decree No 055 of 2020 "by which a public calamity is decreed due to the risks of coastal erosion in the coastal area."</li> <li>- High water consumption and high waste generation in high seasons.</li> </ul>	
		<b>Technological</b> Satellite network coverage in Palomino is very unstable, so there is little development in this area: a large percentage of tourism actors do not have web pages, social networks, digital marketing plans, digital payment channels.	

Source: Own elaboration based on the information provided in the surveys (2023)

new ways to satisfy the demands of customers and tourists.

A practical way to move towards sustainable tourism consists of proposing strategies. To achieve this objective, four strategies are established: strengthening the destination, economic reactivation, productive diversification and digital marketing that it will allow Palomino to be shown as a sustainable tourist destination:

### **Strengthening the destiny**

The entire tourism strategy must be aimed at consolidating Palomino as one of the most important and sustainable tourist destinations in Colombia. The initial step is the motivation for dialogue and articulated work between businessmen in the tourism sector, unions, government entities and civil society. Observing the distance that exists between these sectors when working



for the tourist activity of the Palomino district, it is vitally important to convene these sectors to technical tables where discussions are generated that motivate the development of continuous improvements. Likewise, it is necessary that the actions be articulated with the Sustainable Development Goals that are transversal to tourism, with goals 8, 12, 14 being those that have a specific relationship with the activity.

To do this, it is detailed which aspect within each objective will be taken into account:

*Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth:* The achievement of this objective can occur by strengthening the quality and number of jobs for residents in activities related to tourism, without discrimination of race, sex, disability or other forms of discrimination.

*Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure:* It should be noted that the infrastructure and quality of public services in Palomino are precarious; Today it only has one paved street, the provision of public services is intermittent and it only has natural gas permanently for the development of tourism. In this context, state intervention and private investment are necessary to renew the infrastructure, making them more sustainable and efficient in terms of resources, which in the future will attract foreign investment.

*Goal 12 Responsible production and consumption:* Protect tourist resources considering the carrying capacity of tourists. This includes:

- Prepare a plan that guarantees optimal tourism development at the disposal of the ecosystem, where areas of intensive use and conservation areas are established and set general limits of growth and use. Deteriorated ecosystems such as crab fishing should receive special attention.
- Reduce considerably waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse activities.
- Make widgets to raise awareness about the relevance of tourism for its sustainable development, the attention and respect to the visitor, the knowledge, information and appropriation of the tourist attractions of Palomino, appreciation and respect of the capital of the district for the strengthening of tourism and the effect of its actions on the natural, economic, cultural and social.

*Goal 14: Underwater life:* Preserve and sustainably use the seas and marine resources as an alternative to coastal erosion in the Palomino district. The strategy includes a diagnosis, which will form the basis for guiding action plans to develop projects in this area. Sustainable management of artisanal fishing will also be promoted as the second line of Palomino's economic activities, through the regulation of fishing exploitation that does not allow excessive, unregulated fishing and bad fishing practices.

The implementation of these strategies is key for Palomino to be recognized as a tourist desti-

nation: authentic because its offer will be based on value for the client and the community, which will make it a unique and different destination; inclusive because the tourist activity will respect the culture, values, lifestyle and will reduce poverty and ecological because it aims to minimize the negative impacts on its natural environment thanks to raising awareness and tourist culture.

### Economic reactivation

The tourism sector in Colombia was the most affected as a result of the pandemic. According to DANE, hotel income decreased 83.1% during September 2020, a discouraging panorama for municipalities that, a large part of their economy, is represented by tourism. This panorama was discouraging in an economic sector that had been experiencing sustained growth since 2014, which meant an opportunity for economic and social development for the regions. Strengthening

**Table 2**  
*Economic Reactivation Strategies*

Strategies	Responsible / allies
Number 1: Motivate companies in the Palomino tourism sector to leverage business financing, with direct credit through the National Guarantee Fund (FNG) or Findeter. To do this, support days must be designed by the advisors directly in the tourist area where they explain the modalities, conditions, benefits, and guarantees.	Gobernación de La Guajira, Comision Regional de Competitividad e Innovación de La Guajira Alcaldía Municipal de Dibulla
Number 2: Motivate companies in the tourism sector to certify with quality seals established by the national government for biosafety, this translates into confidence on the part of the tourist.	Cámara de Comercio de La Guajira y Alcaldía Municipal de Dibulla
Number 3: Generate discussion tables and brainstorming sessions with all sectors that lead to actions of greater innovation and competitiveness for the tourism sector of the Palomino district.	Cámara de Comercio de La Guajira, Alcaldía Municipal de Dibulla y Universidad de La Guajira

Source: Own elaboration (2023)

tourism is one of the priorities within the economic reactivation plans of the country and the world. Below are some key strategies to achieve this in the municipality of Palomino.

### Productive diversification

Tourism generates a multiplier effect that diversifies the economy, and can be defined in its simplest form as how many times the money spent by a tourist circulates through the economy of a country. The

**Table 3**  
*Productive diversification Strategies*

Strategies	Responsible / allies
Number 1: Focus on the tourism actors of the Palomino district through workshops and help tables to guide the tourism vocation and develop a productive chain that energizes all the links in the tourism value chain and enhances the productivity of the companies that provide services, related to tourism located in the territory.	Gobernación de La Guajira, Comision Regional de Competitividad e Innovación de La Guajira Alcaldía Municipal de Dibulla
Promote fair trade that involves communities and the different value chains that can support entrepreneurship, improve technical, technological and linguistic skills and abilities of people focused on tourism.	SENA, Universidad de La Guajira, Gobernación de La Guajira

Source: Own elaboration (2023)

actions described below will improve the employability levels of the sector, improve the quality of life of its inhabitants and expand interest in the conservation of the natural capital of the district, discover new market niches that diversify demand, promote attractions and design new tourist products.

## Digital Marketing

In the last decade, the world has witnessed how the global economy has become digitalized, giving rise to new professions, business models and jobs. As a result of this transformation, a new type of tourism is born, known as digital tourism, in which digital channels play a fundamental role in audience segmentation. Being up to date with new technologies and using them as a channel to communicate with the target audience will be essential to get to know them.

**Table 4**  
*Digital Marketing Strategies*

Strategies	Responsible / allies
Creating a destination website is ideal for showcasing unique selling points, communicating directly with your target audience, and promoting your destination through images, videos, and virtual reality tours. In addition, it will allow travelers to be provided with all the information they need before their trip and promote accommodation options, attractions, events, places to eat and drink, among others.	Gobernación de La Guajira y Alcaldía Municipal de Dibulla
Influencers have great power in social networks to influence people's decisions, especially with regard to tourist activity, becoming the new travel guides: nowadays the opinion and recommendations of Influencers generate a sense of security in potential visitors.	Gobernación de La Guajira, Procolombia
Branding is a technique used by companies to make them easily identifiable. The use of a destination brand in Palomino that includes logos, combinations, colors and slogans will make it easily recognizable and notable to others.	Gobernación de La Guajira, Procolombia
Virtual reality marketing goes a step further and provides ways for your target audience to experience aspects of your destination from the comfort of their home. This could be a virtual tour of a local hotel or a tourist site that is the closest to a real experience and that motivates you to visit the place.	Gobernación de La Guajira, Ministerio de Industria y Turismo.

Source: Own elaboration (2023)

As a digital marketing strategy, it is necessary to take advantage of the benefits of the use of ICTs for people and companies, because through them it is possible to make Palomino known as a sustainable tourist destination, through applications such as mobile apps. Websites, digital billboards, QR code, e-mail marketing, digital marketing campaigns, influencer marketing, big data among others.

The development of a destination website will allow users to connect from any device, be it tablets, smartphones, laptops, among others, with the content strategy that is disseminated to publicize Palomino and its tourist activity. The website must contain the following sections:

- Events area: This section will show the most significant events of the current month.
- Integration with social networks: At the bottom the updates that are taking place on social networks will be reflected.
- Agenda: The agenda on the website will contain all the exhibitions, theatrical produc-

tions, musical performances and various events that take place in Palomino.

- **News:** The institutional communication carried out from the Tourism office of the municipality of Dibulla and the tourism department will be reflected in this section with the information provided by the institutional press teams.
- **Travel plans:** users can generate their own travel plans by selecting the points of interest they want to visit during their visit to Palomino. Within the section, featured routes of the month should be suggested for users according to their needs.
- **Interactive Postcards:** the tourism website must have the postcard or virtual card service. For this, the creation and promotion of postcards will be programmed to coincide with events such as Christmas, Easter and others that occur in the township of Palomino. In addition to events, you can create custom postcards with striking images of the destination.
- **Blog:** a blog with relevant content must be created that allows users to disseminate the experience within the destination.

### **Big data**

Big Data refers to all the infrastructures, technologies and services necessary to process the large volumes of data that are stored and extracted from the digital environment. Big data allows the consumer experience to be improved because based on the data and information provided by tourists, it is possible to make estimates and predictions of their purchasing behavior. The key parameters can be used for the tourist site and with which the customer experience can be improved are:

- Place of origin and arrival route
- Time spent in place
- Common trips
- Type of accommodation they use
- Average expenses during the stay

In addition, tourism actors will be able to leverage existing applications such as Colombia Travel that will allow them to reach millions of users where they will be able to display their detailed information, a calendar with local festivals and events, tourist sites and graphic content with photos, maps and videos.

## 5. DISCUSSION

These findings constitute a risk for the natural ecosystem of Palomino since, if they are not cared for, preserved and their use is improper, they will deteriorate and disappear over time. This is consistent with what Goded (2003) states, for whom one of the main tourism risks is the deterioration of heritage due to inadequate management of tourist flows, affecting development processes. If the deterioration of the natural ecosystem continues to increase and the lack of tourist infrastructure in Palomino is affected, tourist demand will decrease, leading to another great risk, which is the instability of income due to the low arrival of travelers.

Likewise, they consider that the local and national government does not provide the conditions for the provision of an excellent tourist service and does not ensure the protection of the tourist resources of the Palomino district, a situation that does not correspond to what was stated by Lickorish (1994) who notes that the public sector; Represented by the State in its different jurisdictions, it is the main actor capable of intervening in the management of tourist resources efficiently and with a sustainable criterion. That is, the government is the one who must provide a framework that encourages and allows the private sector and other stakeholders to implement a set of policies for the increase and implementation of sustainable tourism.

Regarding the participation of the hotel/hospitality sector in the investment and protection of the natural resources of Palomino, there is a waste and little regulation of them that are not related to the base points indicated by the UNWTO (2020b) for the development of sustainable tourism, where they propose that to make appropriate use of natural resources, it is vitally important to maintain essential ecological processes and help conserve natural resources and biological diversity.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This research made it possible to carry out a diagnosis of the tourist situation in the Palomino township, La Guajira and determined that the impacts generated by the COVID-19 pandemic were the loss of jobs, bankruptcy on the part of hotel and hospitality entrepreneurs, closure of informal businesses, economic instability in the territory and loss of the population's quality of life due to a decrease in their income.

Likewise, the risks to which inhabitants and natural resources are exposed as a consequence of the economic activity generated by tourism were identified and are related to coastal erosion, solid waste management in high season, lack of investment in tourist infrastructure and the decrease in visitors, which served as key elements for the design of the sustainability strategy that best favors them.

Derived from this research, actions were recommended to strengthen the economy, preserve the identity and conserve the natural and environmental resources of the Palomino district that

allow it to accelerate economic recovery after the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of them focused on the results obtained correspond to the tourist activity of the Palomino township, La Guajira and the proposed actions can be applied to other tourist sites that share geographical conditions and similar resources and capabilities, however, perceptions may vary, needs and situations within the territory.

It should be noted that the success of these actions does not depend solely on companies, but corresponds to the will of government entities, the coordination with academia and the connection of civil society, therefore, the integration of the actors is important to generate an ecosystem that encourages innovation and creativity.

Finally, for future lines of research it is important to consider the gap that exists between the government and the private sector of Palomino and that makes collaborative work difficult for tourism activity, economic and social development, and the competitiveness of the territory. Regarding the sustainable tourism strategies proposed in this study, it may be interesting to disseminate these strategies in another tourist site with similar conditions and carry out a thorough study of their operation in the area to be implemented.

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